



Arkansas Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Initiative

Family Support Work Group - January 11, 2005, 9 - 11 a.m.

Members Present: Deborah Gangluff, Dana Gonzales, Jacqueline Gorton, Martha Reeder, Sorita Rusher, Cristy Sellers, Susan Underwood, and Paula C. Watson. Gil Buchanan was present, representing the Medical Home Work Group. Regrets were received from: Jim Abson, Kathy S. Robinson, and Nancy Yarbrough.

Agenda Item #1: ARMIS (Arkansas Management Information System)

Discussion: Several persons visited the offices for AR ACCESS to review their system. AR ACCESS is a re-source database administered by Arkansas Management Information System. Susan Underwood distributed information related to the new provider application, a provider details sample, and all currently enrolled agency profile listing for review. ARMIS provides contact information for whoever enters information. Every agency providing services inputs what services they offer.

(Notes from October 12 Minutes: Participating agencies/organizations must enter their own information into the system (profile, wish list, or volunteer opportunities). Restrictive usage for confidential information is available. This is a free site for all agencies and can be accessed by other agencies, individuals, etc., seeking information related to a variety of topics important to communities: emergency shelters, food banks, transitional housing, employment opportunities, addiction disorders, day care resources, and counseling, to name a few. There is not necessarily a shared language about defining terms and there are not any sophisticated mechanisms to insure resources are reliable, ethical, etc.

Under the AR Access, there is a fee for a separate service (Service Point) that allows organizations to enter, store, track clients, and share data. Agencies can enter into an agreement to share their data with other agencies. You can share any data you desire, but it is possible to restrict any part of the data.)

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Discussion: The ARMIS system is a wonderful beginning. Depending on the person, it may not be family friendly at this time, but it could be. There are several drop-down menus. There is a map that you can click for "county." The ARMIS information needs to be distributed to others not on the listing providing services.

Jackie reminded the group that every barrier or every problem will not be solved before getting started. Other comments follow. This is so much better than looking through papers. Chances are parents do not have time to go through all the papers if handed papers. Keep in mind too that people who serve families need to be aware that this is available. The Family facilitators at schools could be a wonderful contact. Many facilitators are looking for ways to build up their centers.

It appears that ARMIS and DHS e-Sources are working together. This originated when HUD had a number of different evaluations. The company is a non-profit, and they received grants to begin. There are two parts. One part is free, and the other is not free. You can enter into an agreement with other agencies to share data. The agencies can identify what data they want shared and what they do not want shared.

It would be good all around if there were more data sharing. Every time a grant is written, accurate data is needed. There is part of the site that is not specific to individuals. We need to start with something and it has to be something that can change.

Agenda Item #1, Continued - ARMIS (Arkansas Management Information System)

Discussion: Martha mentioned a website that has some of the same features called, The Family Support Learning Community from greater Kansas City. Web site: www.familysupportamerica.org. In Washington, at the Grantee meeting, they were reminded that anytime you are planning, every part of the project will not be at the same stage at the same time.

Comments continued from the group. It will be necessary for a person to be designated to keep the web site up-dated. There is not an overall person at DHS to keep the web updated. The same is true at the Health Department. It is all done programmatically. There is a need for someone to insure that maintaining the web is a priority. That person will still be at the mercy of the agency person. A "BUY-IN" by the department heads is needed. We need to make sure that the people who are supposed to notify the Webmaster, do so. This may be difficult. The person designed to keep the website updated needs some web design skills, but it would not need to be anything extremely technical. The Webmaster at DHS now will be responsible for the basic web. The designated person would check the site and keep it updated through the Webmaster.

As you know, there is a basic fee for "Service Point." As more entities use the fee services, the price goes down. ARMIS is a non-profit organization, and they need grants to continue to maintain it.

We need to look at the "needs" list to make sure that all the elements are added. Providers need to be really specific about their services provided. We need to look at the site and see if there are missing pieces.

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The Family Support group will need to make their own pre-list and see who should be on this list. Making it "county" specific may be difficult to do. The broader statewide list is where we start the project and then we can expand to county specifics.

ARMIS can be done now. Dana and Deborah have two board meetings coming up. They will take the ARMIS information with them and ask the meeting participants to review the ARMIS information for missing agencies and other missing pieces and reply to Dana. It was noted that there are some elective programs that have chosen on their own to be on the list. This is initiated by the agency, whoever wants to be listed can be listed.

Result: The Parent Education Work Group can also help with this effort as well. The information supplied by Susan will be shared with the Parent Education Work Group on January 28.

Susan will also test with a group in early February from 14 or so counties who will look at the site to see whether it is user-friendly and helpful. Perhaps a type of survey could be used.

Dr. Buchanan provided a copy of the "You are not Alone" Parent Packet, distributed by the Arkansas Governor's Developmental Disabilities Council. It is a guide to services for children with developmental disabilities or chronic medical conditions. Jackie will go through and make sure that the materials (providers) are on the ARACCESS web site.

It was noted that First Connection may be able to help link agencies. Also, it was suggested that DHS County Offices put out a notice encouraging agencies to be included in ARMIS.

TASKS: Members of the Work Group attending the meeting are asked to look the material over and make any suggestions for improvement. For those persons not present, they are asked go to the web site, review the site content, and make improvement suggestions at the next meeting.

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Agenda Item #2: Strengthening Families Initiative - State Pilot Project

Discussion: Martha announced that Arkansas is one of seven states to be selected as pilot projects for the Strengthening Families Initiative by the Center for the Study of Social Policy from the Doris Duke Foundation. (The December 14 minutes provide more information about this pilot project.)

Jackie was one of the two people representing Arkansas in Albuquerque, New Mexico. The PowerPoint sheets provide the introductory information. While in Albuquerque, the representatives from the seven states visited and observed model programs. There are lots of parallel between this project and the state family mapping situation.

The Center for the Study of Social Policy has identified five protective factors known to reduce child abuse and neglect. Our plan was liked because the infrastructure already existed and is similar to what they are already doing. The fact that we were able to move quickly had to do with the systems planning initiative.

One idea was the toolkit. They liked that idea. As a result, we are combining the leadership team with the systems planning with the leadership team for strengthening families. We will have some new representatives from the strengthening families group on the leadership team. The Strengthening Families system addresses child care facilities and help providers recognize abuse and neglect and intervene before it becomes a serious problem.

Gil Buchanan asked the following question: How did they project that this would be something that providers could do? Martha suggested that to get a real idea, go to the website: www.cssp.org. There is a short informal paper on each one of the elements. All of these overlap. There is also a Handbook for childcare providers.

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The Center wants to have a system where they can go into specific facilities and train the staff how to use the material. It is a combination "Peer to Peer" system. They previously selected 12 sites that were exemplary and individuals from the 12 sites came to the meeting. The sites are built in to the Peer to Peer training.

Question: How do we find the exemplary centers in Arkansas? There is not any money coming from the grant, but the technical assistance that they offer is very valuable.

We need to make sure that some of the Universities doing training be aware of this information and be part of the program. This is a piece of the puzzle that fits right into the tier system that the Early Care and Education Work Group is working on. What would mean quality with regard for family, medical home, etc.? Strengthening Families gives support to that quality scale. Some facet crosses over into other work groups.

The representative from Strengthening Families will be going over the state plan. They want to help us develop the tool kit. The bones would be the protective factors principals.

There are screening tools that are available for abuse. There is a tool that they will put into the hands of child care workers. In one of the position papers, there is talk of tools. There are program self-assessment tools. There is the early warning signs build into the assessment. Dr. Buchanan feels the word, "screening," should appear somewhere.

Data information is very important and some things need to be firmed up. The Strengthening Families people will be at the March 10-11 meeting. Part of this meeting will be devoted to specific AECCS business, and part will be orientation to Strengthening Families.

TASKS: Martha will talk to Kathy, and Deniece concerning the process needed to actually get an actual web site up and running. We will probably begin small and expand.

Agenda Item #3: Next Meeting Date - Miscellaneous - Adjournment

Discussion: This group may not need to meet in March. It was suggested that the February meeting be changed to a later date in February. February 22 was suggested as a possible meeting date rather than the second Tuesday. It was noted that Deborah, Dana, and Susan are not available on Feb 22.

The national level on assessment will be reported on at a future meeting since Sherrill Archer was not able to attend this meeting.

The tool kit sub-group has been put on hold until after the March 10-11, 2005, meeting.

It was suggested that someone from the mapping project be invited to come and discuss or share information with the group.

We will probably find our exemplary programs in the Schools of the 21st Century. This project has a comprehensive approach model.

Dana has not received the information related to UTAH Click.

Result: There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

TASKS: Paula and Martha were asked to Query the members of the work group to determine which date would work best for the next meeting: February 8 or February 22. The information is to be reported to the co-chairs and a decision made at that time.

NOTE: Next Meeting - February 22, 2005, 9-11 a.m.
Baker Building